

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 561
By Brown

A RESOLUTION to designate March 1998 as Professional Social
Work Centennial Month in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the citizens of our great state benefit daily from the efforts of dedicated professional social workers; members of this commendable profession have a century of experience in helping individuals and effecting social change that benefits everyone; and

WHEREAS, social work emerged as a field in the nineteenth century in response to poverty, homelessness, mistreatment of prisoners and persons with mental illness, and the plight of widows and orphans; and

WHEREAS, the first official training class for this new profession began in 1898, and since that fateful year, social workers have played key roles in every major social reform movement, from settlement houses to labor reform, and from the New Deal to civil rights; and

WHEREAS, many things we take for granted today – Social Security, child labor laws, the minimum wage, the 40-hour week, Medicare, unemployment insurance, humane treatment of persons with mental illness – came about because social workers saw injustice, acted and inspired others; and

WHEREAS, social workers today are trained professionals who have bachelor's, master's or doctorate degrees in social work; they practice in a wide variety of settings including family services agencies, community mental health centers, child welfare, private practice, schools, nursing homes, courts, prisons, and public and private agencies; and

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WHEREAS, professional social workers provide valuable services today in health and mental health, child welfare, aging, and other areas; these admirable professionals give unreservedly of themselves to increase opportunities for all members of society and to speak out on behalf of the poor, the vulnerable, and the voiceless; and

WHEREAS, the profession of social work is committed to:

- The promotion, restoration, maintenance and enhancement of the functioning of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, by helping them to accomplish tasks, prevent and alleviate distress and use resources;

- The planning, formulation, and implementation of social policies, services, resources, and programs needed to meet basic human needs and support the development of human capacities;

- The pursuit of policies, services, resources and programs through organizational or administrative advocacy, and social or political action, to empower groups at risk and to promote social and economic justice; and

- The development and testing of professional knowledge and skills related to these purposes; and

WHEREAS, social work education is based upon a specific body of knowledge, values and professional skills. It is grounded in the profession's history and philosophy. Education for the profession promotes the development and advancement of knowledge, practice skills and services that further the well-being of others and promote social and economic justice; and

WHEREAS, social work education is responsible for the production and application of research and scholarship aimed at advancing social work practice; and

WHEREAS, the accreditation of social work programs is a system for recognizing educational institutions and professional programs affiliated with those institutions as having a level of performance, integrity and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public they serve; and

WHEREAS, graduates of such programs have professional status, meaning they can be licensed to practice social work and attain membership in the National Association of Social Workers; and

WHEREAS, being a professional social worker means that a person has the skills and knowledge base of the social work profession, that they practice according to the code of ethics and values of the social work profession, that they have the support and recognition of professional affiliation, and can enjoy the collegiality, respect and collaboration of other professional social workers; and

WHEREAS, programs of social work education are currently offered at the baccalaureate, master's and doctoral levels at Austin Peay State University, David Lipscomb University, East Tennessee State University, Freed-Hardeman University, Middle Tennessee State University, Tennessee State University, the University of Memphis, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and the University of Tennessee at Martin; and

WHEREAS, today social workers are the largest group of mental health services providers in our great nation; the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has more than 155,000 registered members and the Department of Labor predicts this nation will have more than 600,000 total social workers by the year 2005; and

WHEREAS, this group is actively responding to our most modern-day issues, including welfare reform, managed health care, economic insecurity, and an increasingly multicultural society; and

WHEREAS, in Tennessee, social workers are known for their "quiet" advocacy efforts; Tennessee social workers supported improvements made under the Education Improvement Act in 1992, and in 1993, social workers became involved in a three-year phase-in program that increased the standard of living for welfare recipients; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee social workers also were involved with the Social Work Certification and Licensure Law, enacted to ensure the quality of social workers' practices in our state; social workers also played a significant role in the evolution of Families First and TennCare legislation, and social workers continue to monitor and provide feedback on these two significant pieces of legislation today; and

WHEREAS, other exemplary efforts which social workers supported include the Mandated State Funding Bill for education, the Domestic Abuse Victims Protection Act, the Family Care Support Service Act, AIDS Anti-Discrimination Legislation, the Dropout Prevention Act, the Tax Reform Act, the Medicaid Expansion Bill, the Family Leave and Medical Leave Act and the Funding Impaired Practice Programs Bill; and

WHEREAS, on a daily basis professional social workers help to alleviate society's most intractable problems, working one-on-one with troubled children and families, organizing communities for change, performing cutting edge research, and administering social programs; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate upon the one-hundredth anniversary of this laudable profession that we honor the social workers in our state who have dedicated their lives to the betterment of their fellow men; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby designate the month of March 1998 as Professional Social Work Centennial Month in recognition of the one-hundredth anniversary of the social work profession and in celebration of all the good works performed by the honorable social work professionals in our state and nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final resolving clause omitted from such copy.

